

Session 13-06 a Regular Meeting of the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Ulmer at 6-- p.m. on June 26, 2013 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONER CARROLL, HARTLEY, HOWARD, STOCKBURGER, ULMER, ZIMMERMAN

ABSENT: WEDIN

STAFF: PORT DIRECTOR/HARBORMASTER HAWKINS
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN
PLANNING TECHNICIAN ENGBRETSSEN

AGENDA APPROVAL

HOWARD/HARTLEY MOVED APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Kevin Hogan, former city resident, said he thinks fish pumps in the harbor are an important issue. There are a lot of people who want to move fish and right now no one has a right to put in a fish pump. Whatever can be done to facilitate it will be good. He has interest in putting in a proposal but hasn't because at the present time he doesn't know where they stand. But they are interested and so are other people.

Jeff Berger provided the Commission with a copy of his proposal. Mr. Berger gave a brief overview of his life in the fishing industry, starting in Kodiak and Bristol Bay, 30 year owner of Deep Creek Custom Packing, and is presently Regional Manager for Copper River Seafoods, who is developing a big plant in Kenai. He said they are interested in pumping their tenders over the Homer dock, they do a lot of business with the Fish Factory and Auction Block. Pumping is a real efficient way to handle fish, and it's safer than swinging totes over the dock. When he asked the Harbormaster about performing this type of operation he was informed that the only permanent fish pump belongs to Icicle, and others tenders currently use their own pump, pump fish onto their deck, and swing totes over the dock. He reiterated that it would be more efficient and safer to be able to do it in the manner outlined in his proposal.

In response to questions Mr. Berger gave a brief overview of how the pumping process works and the importance of water management throughout the process. He thinks this will continue to become more of an issue as the pink salmon production from the hatcheries starts coming on line.

RECONSIDERATION

There was no reconsideration scheduled.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 22, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes

STOCKBURGER/HARTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS

A. Planning Technician Engebretsen – Homer Spit Parking Lot Adjacent to Board Walk

Planning Technician Engebretsen reviewed her memorandum in the packet. She explained that narrow parking aisles and angled parking will accommodate a lot of cars and trucks in a fairly small space. She noted the Anchor Point beach parking area that has recently been paved and marked is a good example if anyone has a chance to go out and look at the three rows of parking they have established there. She asked them to think about:

- Whether they want parking spaces designed for everyday cars and trucks and a separate area with signage for oversized vehicles and RV's. She noted that concept works well in Valdez.
- The idea of overflow parking in the existing parking lot that stays longer term parking, but the area between the Boardwalk Fish and Chips and current parking lot have day use parking.

In response to questions, Mrs. Engebretsen reviewed the property lines and locations of DOT rights of way and explained they would need to work with DOT on permits. It is her understanding that Harbormaster Hawkins had talked to Army Corps of Engineers and if the fill stays above the mean high tide line then an ACOE permit isn't needed. There may be other permits that come into play but nothing that's insurmountable.

Harbormaster Hawkins commented that it would be a stretch to get an operation set up to pump the dredged material directly to the area being considered, so materials would be dewatered in the current

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location and trucked over. The area hasn't been surveyed to establish how much material would be needed. In regard to when the project could get started Mr. Hawkins explained that engineering will need to be done and the City doesn't own all the property involved, so it would likely take about two years to get ready to start filling the area.

Mrs. Engebretsen explained that for efficient parking the area would need to be paved and striped. In dealing with run off, beach grass and swales are being used presently as filters. She also explained parking lot sizes and angles, and a layout that could include a bike lane, a driveway aisle, and off street angled parking so that cars and people aren't mixing.

There was brief discussion that the funding will likely come from the City's capital budget and will need to be established through the annual budgeting process. It is a project that can be done in stages, like focusing first on getting the area filled adequately and properly, then plan for future paving.

Staff will work on getting more information regarding what the next steps would be and have information at the next meeting.

It was noted that this is something the Commission has talked about before and Harbormaster Hawkins explained that the application to ACOE at that time was for a bigger project that included significantly more fill and armoring.

STAFF AND COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORTS

A. Port and Harbor Director's Report for June 2013

Harbormaster Hawkins reviewed his staff report that was included in the packet. He also addressed an additional challenge with the minus tide in which the lower half of the concrete float came off a stall on B float and landed in Inua stall. The box had to be removed and divers were working to float it so it could be towed over to the barge ramp. He explained some options for replacing the float.

In response to questions Harbormaster Hawkins said he couldn't explain the costs related to the restrooms at the harbor. The barge that is sitting on the beach will likely be there for the summer, Peninsula Scrap owns it, they are paying the moorage on it at the same rate as if it were in the harbor, and it is only being allowed because of the good relationship between the harbor and this company. He is confident they will deal with it.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

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A. Memorandum from Planning Technician Engebretsen re: Homer Spit Parking Lot Adjacent to Boardwalk

The Commission will have more discussion about parking at their next meeting.

B. Memorandum from Port Director/Harbormaster Hawkins Re: Fish Pumps on the Homer Fish Dock

Harbormaster Hawkins explained that two written proposals have come in as well two verbal inquiries, but staff has not moved forward with this. He noted some questions he posed in the staff report regarding a city owned pump relating to cost, maintenance, installation, who uses, when, and where to put it. Icicles set up is good and not in the way, but he questions if it could be done any place else on the dock by the City.

Commissioner Howard asked if the pumps sitting on a tender raise any logistical issues. Harbormaster Hawkins referenced Mr. Berger's proposal and said it doesn't look like a big footprint on the dock, if they can set them up, do the work, take them apart, and get out of the way for the next one. The pump across idea creates a raft of boats in the space and moving a lot of fish, and it seems feasible. In response to Mr. Berger's comments, Harbormaster Hawkins said it brings to mind some history about the decision being made for fish sorting tables without much thought. As he sees in now, it was a turning point or disincentive for processing in Homer. The cleaning tables allowed the fish to be "processed", even though the state doesn't recognize it, for transport across the dock. He sees the fish pump idea as that way too. Mr. Berger's plant is in Kenai and he is looking for a way to move a lot of fish quickly across the City's dock to take to Kenai to process. Does that bring processing to Homer? Does it bring fish tax to Homer? No, it doesn't.

The Commission asked Mr. Berger back to the microphone. Mr. Berger commented that the removal time is a matter of minutes. In the past different companies had little offices on the docks, but it was a different day, and everyone had free and equal access to the entire dock to do everything. He doesn't understand how it got to one company allowed to do this sort of operation. He commented how it hurt his business in the past. As far as fish tax in Homer most of the fish they unload in Homer is processed at the Fish Factory and some at Auction Block. As far as an offloading operation like this, if there were a higher wharfage for that type of operation it might be considered reasonable. He answered questions from the Commission specific to his operations.

Commissioner Carroll commented that he feels it's a mistake to think the fish pumps are going to take product away from Homer. He thinks Kevin is here saying fish pumps will help his business with product being done at his plant because of the efficiencies of it, as well as the Fish Factory if they were here. Mr. Carroll commented about Icicle and the awkward thing about the arrangement is the fact they seem to own that end of the dock. They bring their tenders in and 3 cranes are gone for hours, and since they have the attitude it is their end of the dock sometimes they don't do anything and tie up the dock. The whole arrangement with Icicle really needs to be looked at again. He doesn't think they have a lease

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arrangement now and they need to look at the whole continuation of this arrangement. It is something that happened a long time ago and is totally inappropriate now.

Harbormaster Hawkins said they do have a have current lease with the City. He explained they don't own that end of the dock and staff does keep them moving and if they aren't working, staff will call and tell them to move. There are a lot of boats staff has to do that with at the fish dock.

Discussion took a turn in the direction of discussion Icicles lease with Mr. Berger expressing his feeling of unfair advantage. Harbormaster Hawkins commented that it's hard to look through the glasses we wear now, to look back 25 or 30 years and be objective about the situation. At that time period when the plant was built there wasn't a lot there and perhaps the City was trying to entice business.

Commissioner Howard interjected that the purpose of the discussion tonight is whether to allow additional fish pumps to operate, whether it is a logical, and fits in with our overall operation.

The Commission continued to ask questions of Mr. Berger regarding his proposal and discuss a City owned operation, which to most of their knowledge no other municipalities offer.

Commissioner Carroll suggested it would be fair to allow Mr. Hogan to talk too.

Chair Ulmer deferred to the Clerk.

Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen commented that she has concerns about the Commission discussing one specific proposal with one specific person when the agenda item is a general discussion about fish pumps on the dock. No one else was invited who submitted proposals and she questions if we are stepping over a line. She recommended they get back to a more generalized discussion about whether or not to allow fish pumps at the harbor.

Commissioner Zimmerman shared his thought that he likes the idea of the floating pump and it wouldn't be impossible for anyone who wants to unload fish to get something to mount their stuff on, move it over to pump fish and when they are done moor it in the harbor. He isn't in favor of the City owning a fish pump. One fish pump isn't enough, and we don't want a half a dozen. They pay wharfage and everyone is treated the same. It would also include crane time if they are holding hoses with a crane. He thinks it's a good deal if people come in, have a safe operation, and then thank them for bringing their fish to Homer.

In response to questions raised in the memo it was indicated that the footprint on the dock would be less than a halibut operation. It would be good to require having hose lengths that could easily be changed as the tide range changes. In relation to the water waste, it would be a mistake to have dewatering boxes dumping on the dock, and water falling that far into the harbor will create more foam.

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Harbormaster Hawkins recommended that if the Commission believes this is an option to look at then we could try it this year. There are too many unknowns at this point but it might be feasible to try it and then revisit it when the season is over and talk about how it went. There will be limitations on how many can set up at the same time.

There was discussion that this may be the way unloading fish is going and it will be good to give it a run this season and see where the pit falls are to have a more effective process in the future. It seems that if they are able to process 100 tons of fish through this method instead of 40 tons with a crane, we will be better off. In response to a comment that the inside dock isn't that busy, Harbormaster Hawkins reviewed the activity that is currently on going or scheduled to take place at the dock. It was noted that the main problem will be time management of dock space. This is a more efficient way to unload, and it will be good to have a system to move them out quickly. When the pink runs come on line we'll be processing a lot more fish across the dock.

The Commission agreed to let Kevin Hogan comment again.

Mr. Hogan commented there are two problems, the immediate and future. The immediate problem is how to get through this year and move the fish. He doesn't want to see 6 fish pumps trying to operate. There is one pump there already that is being underutilized. Next is the logistical problem of what to do with the fish after they come off. If you approach it right it is easy, but scattershot will bring more problems. He recommends contacting Icicle and see if they will open their pump up to greater use to solve the problem at hand now, then move forward with a planning process that will have an effective traffic pattern for the future.

Harbormaster Hawkins said it will be important to get the buyers together to work to lay this out where we can move the product in an organized manner, and he can facilitate a meeting with buyers after the season. He said he can contact Icicle, but he thinks he already knows the answer.

HOWARD/HARTLEY MOVED THAT THE HARBORMASTER BE DIRECTED TO FACILITATE THE USE OF FISH PUMPS DURING THE 2013 FISH SEASON AND GATHER APPROPRIATE DATE AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE SO WE CAN MEET AFTER THE SEASON TO SCOPE OUT A MORE FORMAL, EFFECTIVE PROGRAM FOR THE FUTURE.

Comment was made that this gives the Harbormaster the flexibility to make decisions on what happens this season.

VOTE: YES: HOWARD, STOCKBURGER, ULMER, CARROLL, HARTLEY, ZIMMERMAN

Motion carried.

C. 2014-2019 Capital Improvement Plan

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At the request of the Chair, Harbormaster Hawkins reviewed the harbor projects that are listed in the Capital Improvement Plan and let the group know what his priority is regarding each project.

The Commissions individual rankings were as follows:

Ulmer: Deep Water Dock Expansion, East Boat Harbor, Sheet Pile Loading Dock, HH Float Improvements, System 4 Vessel Mooring Float System

Zimmerman: HH Float Improvements, Sheet Pile Loading Dock, Ramp 8 Restroom, Deep Water Dock, Fire Cart Replacement

Hartley: Deep Water Dock, Sheet Pile Loading Dock, Ramp 8 Restroom, HH Float Improvements, System 4 Vessel Mooring Float System

Carroll: Deep Water Dock, East Boat Harbor, Sheet Pile Loading Dock, Dredge Material Beneficial Use Project, Truck Loading Facility

Stockburger: Deep Water Dock, East Boat Harbor, Sheet Pile Loading Dock, HH Float Improvements, Restrooms

Howard: Deep Water Dock, East Boat Harbor, Sheet Pile Loading Dock, System 4 Vessel Mooring Float System, HH Float Improvements

Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen tallied their rankings and the top five projects include:

1. Deep Water Dock
2. East Boat Harbor
3. Sheet Pile Loading Dock
4. HH Float Improvements
5. System 4 Vessel Mooring Float System

There was consensus of the Commission to forward these recommendations to City Council.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. Monthly Statistical & Performance Report May 2013
- B. Weekly Crane and Ice Report
- C. Deep Water Dock Report
- D. Pioneer Dock Report & Ferry Landings Report
- E. Water Usage Report
- F. South Kenai Peninsula Recreation Shellfish Monitoring Program - May 2013
- G. Kachemak Bay Research Reserve – Salt Marsh Habitats: Citizen Science Monitoring 2011-12

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- H. 2013 Council Meeting Attendance Schedule
- I. 2013 Strategic Plan

There was no discussion of informational items.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

There were no audience comments.

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Harbormaster Hawkins commented that Council transferred the funds collected from Buccaneer Alaska while the rig Endeavor was at the dock, from operations budget to port and harbor reserves. That helped replace the money that was taken out to fund our bond. This doubled the 2012 contribution to reserves and if we keep tracking the way we are now with wharfage, dockage, and water sales from the rig, which will be working through the winter, he thinks they will have another large transfer to the reserves next year after audit. The longshoremen are happy campers with all the work, things are going great at the Deep Water Dock. He talked about the Top Gear reality TV show that did some filming around the harbor.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

None

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Stockburger said thanks for letting him come again.

Commissioner Hartley said he was glad there wasn't a ball game tonight.

Commissioner Howard said in parking he would like to see the enforcement person to talk to people who don't park within the lines in one hour parking or where ever, it certainly screws up parking when they don't get within the lines. It would be good to make some effort put in to education folks about how to get within the lines when they park.

There were no other Commission comments.

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ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 26, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____